

Pedestrian Advisory Committee Resolution



To: Minneapolis City Council, Minneapolis Public Works,
Hennepin County Public Works

From: Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Date: March 1, 2023

Subject: METRO B Line/Lake Street Improvements

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the vast majority of the METRO B Line/Lake Street Improvements Project but does have significant concerns about parts of the project as proposed.

The PAC overwhelmingly supports Metro Transit's arterial bus rapid transit program, including the METRO B Line. The PAC is excited to see and supports the partnership between Metro Transit, Hennepin County, and the City in pursuing significant improvements to the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists in the corridor in coordination with the transit project. The PAC looks forward to similar coordinated agency action in future transit projects.

The PAC supports all major components of the Lake Street Improvements Project, including curb bump-outs to shorten crossing distances, reconstructed pedestrian ramps and updated signaling infrastructure to improve accessibility, and the proposed bikeway.

The PAC urges the County and City to make the following modifications:

1. Provide improved infrastructure at all unsignalized intersections that clearly indicates the presence of pedestrian crossings of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue. At a minimum, painted crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signage must be provided at all legal crossings of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue. The PAC strongly encourages the inclusion of additional features to improve visibility, yield rates, and safety at these crossings.
2. Modifications to the crossing of Dupont Avenue South on the north side of Lagoon Avenue. At a minimum, a painted crosswalk must be provided. The PAC encourages consideration of other modifications to incentivize drivers traveling southbound on Dupont Avenue South to come to a complete stop before turning onto westbound Lagoon Avenue, including modifications to tighten the curb radius at the northwest corner and the inclusion of a raised crosswalk.
3. Provide pedestrian ramps at the Holmes Avenue and Lake Street intersection along with painted crosswalks and signage, like all other unsignalized crossings of Lake Street.

This area includes a diverse mix of uses, regional attractions, and dense housing which fosters a high level of pedestrian activity. At the same time, natural features and the configuration of major roadways in the larger area direct a significant volume of vehicular through-traffic into the area and encourage dangerous and illegal vehicle speeds. Existing transportation infrastructure, particularly the design of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue, is largely configured to respond to mid-twentieth century ideas of modal priority which elevate the throughput for vehicles originating outside of the area over the safety and wellbeing of residents and visitors. The current design of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue in and around the project area is incompatible with the City's modal priorities and transportation and climate policy goals.

The PAC appreciates the proposed project and the improvement it will bring to safety in the project area. However, the project scope is wholly inadequate to address the severe deficiencies of the existing street design in the area and its inherent incompatibility with its context. The PAC urges the County and the City to take a comprehensive look at safety, accessibility, and modal priority in the area, including consideration of the elimination of the Lake-Lagoon one-way couplet and either the conversion of both streets back to two-way traffic, or the full pedestrianization of one of the two, with the other returning to a two-way configuration. The PAC urges the County and City at a minimum to make firm plans to correct the two most urgent deficiencies with the existing street design which fall outside of the current project scope:

1. Provide widened sidewalks on both sides of Lagoon Ave between Hennepin Ave and Knox Ave S which at minimum accommodate a fully ADA-compliant pedestrian access route free of obstructions along their entire length.
2. Eliminate the expressway-style segment of Lake St which exists between East Bde Maka Ska Pkwy and West Bde Maka Ska Pkwy. Because the road is straight and wide with one-way vehicular traffic and limited stop lights or signs, drivers are implicitly encouraged to travel at high speeds and to ignore pedestrians along the way. The PAC urges the County and City to replace this roadway design with a new design that is conducive of vehicle speeds and driver awareness compatible with its urban context.